

WASHINGTON, DC- Today, Congressman Jim Costa (D-Fresno) thanked USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack's for his announcement to increase dairy price support prices, which will provide some relief to dairy farmers as they continue to suffer through this period of historically low milk prices. Vilsack announced that USDA will increase the amount paid for dairy products through the Dairy Product Price Support Program .

"Our Valley's dairy farmers have been struggling to stay in business, and I have been urging Secretary Vilsack to use all of his authority to implement programs to ease this crisis," Costa said. "Increasing the amount paid for dairy products, along with the implementation of the Dairy Export Incentive Program back in May, are part of the efforts that can help our dairy farmers through this rough time. I want to thank Secretary Vilsack for his recognition of the crisis and his actions to help alleviate the suffering."

The Dairy Price Support Program was authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill and requires USDA to purchase products at minimum prices. Today's increase will raise the price paid for nonfat dry milk from \$0.80 per pound to \$0.92 per pound, the price paid for cheddar blocks from \$1.13 per pound to \$1.31 per pound, and the price of cheddar barrels from \$1.10 per pound to \$1.28 per pound. This increase in the support price will have an immediate effect upon dairy farmers' bottom line.

Costa has been working with Secretary Vilsack and his colleagues on the House Agriculture Committee to find solutions to this crisis. In May, following months of work by Costa and Congressman Dennis Cardoza (D-Atwater), the USDA announced they would implement the Dairy Export Incentive Program (DEIP) to help U.S. dairy exporters compete with prevailing world prices.